

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A coupling system for a medical dissection tool, the coupling system configured to interconnect a power source to a dissection tool, the coupling system comprising:

a coupling shaft having a proximal portion for receiving power from the power source, a distal portion and a longitudinal axis, said distal portion having an external surface and defining an internal passage adapted for receiving a portion of the medical dissection tool, and at least one aperture extending from said external surface to said internal passage; and

at least one locking member positioned adjacent said at least one aperture and movable with respect to the coupling shaft through a first path in a direction at least partially parallel to said longitudinal axis into a locked position to prevent the medical dissection tool from moving along the longitudinal axis of the internal passage.

2. (Original) The coupling system of claim 1 wherein the first path is created by moving the at least one locking member toward the tool shaft and in a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis.
3. (Original) The coupling system of claim 1 wherein the first path extends at an angle of approximately 45° to the longitudinal axis.
4. (Original) The coupling system of claim 1 wherein the at least one locking member comprises a spherical ball.
5. (Original) The coupling system of claim 1 wherein the at least one locking member comprises three locking members.
6. (Previously Presented) The coupling system of claim 1 wherein the at least one locking member comprises three spherical balls.

7. (Original) The coupling system of claim 1, wherein said proximal portion and said distal portion are integrally formed on a single shaft.
8. (Original) The coupling system of claim 1 further comprising an engagement sleeve disposed adjacent said distal portion, said engagement sleeve having an internal contact surface configured for engaging the at least one locking member into a locked position through the first path.
9. (Previously Presented) The coupling system of claim 1, wherein the dissection tool includes a proximal end and said internal passage includes an internal shoulder, said at least one locking member urging said dissection tool proximal end against said internal shoulder when in said locked position.
10. (Original) The coupling system of claim 8, further including a biasing member urging said engagement sleeve to contact said at least one locking member to move to said locked position.
11. (Original) The coupling system of claim 1 wherein the at least one locking member moves through a second path into an unlocked position.
12. (Previously Presented) The coupling system of claim 1 further comprising an engagement shaft wherein at least one opening in the engagement shaft holds the at least one locking member.
13. (Original) The coupling system of claim 1 further comprising a retention member residing inside the internal passage wherein the retention member is configured to couple with one end of the medical dissection tool.

14. (Currently Amended) A coupler for coupling a power source to a surgical dissection tool having a longitudinal axis, the coupler comprising:

a housing defining an outer surface with a portion adapted for coupling to the power source and an internal passage for receiving a portion of the dissection tool, an aperture defined between said outer surface and said internal passage, the aperture at least partially defined by a proximal surface portion and an opposing distal surface portion; and

at least one locking member disposed adjacent said aperture, said locking member moveable at least partially along the longitudinal axis from an unlocked position disposed substantially outside said internal passage and spaced from the proximal surface portion to a locked position spaced from the distal surface portion and having at a least a portion of said locking member disposed within said internal passage; and

an engagement member disposed adjacent said aperture for urging the locking member into the locked position through a first path.

15. (Original) The coupling system of claim 14 wherein the first path includes movement of the locking member toward the dissection tool and movement parallel to the longitudinal axis.

16. (Original) The coupling system of claim 14 wherein the first path is at approximately 45° to the longitudinal axis.

17. (Original) The coupling system of claim 14 wherein the locking member comprises a spherical ball.

18. (Original) The coupling system of claim 14 wherein the coupling assembly comprises two additional locking members.

19. (Currently Amended) The coupling system of claim 18 wherein the three ~~there~~ locking members comprise three spherical balls.

20. (Original) The coupling system of claim 14 wherein the locking member moves through another path into an unlocked position.

21. (Previously Presented) The coupling system of claim 14 further comprising an engagement shaft wherein an opening in the engagement shaft holds the locking member.

22. (Currently Amended) A coupling assembly for joining a power source to a medical dissection tool having a longitudinal axis, the coupling assembly comprising:

a coupling housing having a proximal portion configured to receive power from the power source and a distal portion configured to receive a portion of the dissection tool; and

a means for locking the dissection tool to the coupling housing configured to move the dissection tool within the coupling housing along the longitudinal axis, wherein said means for locking is at least partially moveable along the longitudinal axis with respect to the coupling housing.

23. (Original) The coupling assembly of claim 22, wherein said coupling housing includes an internal bore configured to receive the dissection tool, and the internal bore includes an internal shoulder, said means for locking configured to move the dissection tool into abutting engagement with said internal shoulder in a locked position.